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AN

# ACCOUNT

OF THE

# Improvements

ON THE

# *ESTATE*

OF

# SUTHERLAND,

BELONGING TO THE

## *Marquis and Marchioness*

OF

# STAFFORD.

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## 1815.

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[By James Loch]

# AN ACCOUNT

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# *ESTATE of SUTHERLAND,*

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# *Marquis and Marchioness of Stafford.*

THE improvement of the HIGHLANDS of SCOTLAND is a ſubject which has long occupied the attention, and divided the opinion of thoſe more immediately connected with this diſtrict of the country. From its real importance, as well as from the diſcuſſions, to which it has given riſe, it has become a ſubject of general curioſity and intereſt, and with many who have made up their minds upon the queſtion, from partial ſtatements and erroneous impreſſions, it has become a matter of feeling and paſſion—The diſſimilarity of language, manners, and cuſtoms, which diſtinguiſh the Highlanders from the other inhabitants of the iſland, has ſpread a ſort of romantic intereſt about every thing connected with their paſt hiſtory, or future deſtiny. Feelings which have been heightened from the circumſtance of this country having been of late years the only place where the curioſity of an Engliſh traveller could be eaſily and ſafely gratified, by viſiting ſcenes and people differing materially from what he was daily accuſtomed to contemplate.

For theſe reaſons, as well as on account of the importance of the ſubject itſelf, it is expected that the following account of the Improvements which have been and are now carrying on in the County, and eſpecially on the ESTATE of SUTHERLAND, may be intereſting even to thoſe, whoſe purſuits and habits do not uſually lead them to attend to ſuch ſubjects, but eſpecially to thoſe to whom the proſperity of the country, even in its moſt remote diſtricts,

is an object of satisfaction. The publication of such an account has been for some time in contemplation, but it was thought better to postpone it until the effects of these improvements could be perceived, and the advantages to be derived from their introduction could be fully estimated, when their wisdom and propriety should no longer depend on reasoning alone, but should at the same time be fully demonstrated by the test of experience and success.

The County of Sutherland is bounded by the Atlantic on the west, on the north by the great Northern Ocean, on the east by the County of Caithness, and on the south by the German Ocean extended into the Moray and Dornoch Friths and by the County of Ross; being separated from the latter county chiefly by lakes and rivers, in the short space which intervenes between the Dornoch Frith and the Atlantic. Owing to its high northern latitude and its almost insular position, the air is moist and sharp, and adverse to the growth of timber. The winters are tedious and boisterous. The springs, cold and ungenial, are frequently prolonged late into the year; the summers are consequently short, and though the sun has great power during the day, which is much encreased by the reflection from the hills producing a most rapid vegetation, yet the evenings among the mountains being generally cool and chilly, and frequently accompanied with mildews and early frosts, prove fatal to all crops except those upon the coast, especially as they are succeeded by a variable and unsteady autumn.

The western district, from the river Naver to the Kyles Ku of Assynt, is the property of Lord Reay—the greater portion of the remainder of the county comprises the Estate of Sutherland, washed on one side by the Northern Ocean, and on the other by the Moray and Dornoch Friths,* beyond which are situated the estates of Messrs. Dempster, of Skibo, Gilchrist of Ospisdale, Houstoun of Creich, M'Cleod of Cadboll, Munro of Achany, Munro of Pointsfield, Lord Ashburton, and Sir Charles Ross, bounding with the estate of Assynt, situated upon the Atlantic,

* Within these boundaries are situated the estate of Mr Gordon of Embo, upon the Moray Frith, and of Mrs. Mackay of Bighouse, upon the Northern Ocean, bounding with Caithness. The County comprises about 1,152,000 acres, of which nearly two-thirds forms the Estate or Earldom of Sutherland; and less than half that quantity, the Estate of Lord Reay. The residue is unequally divided between the remaining Proprietors above mentioned.

Atlantic, a detached but extenſive portion of the ESTATE of SUTHERLAND.

There are few diſtricts of Scotland poſſeſſed of ſo ſmall a quantity of land fit for cultivation, in proportion to its extent—Each ſhore is fringed (if the expreſſion may be uſed) with a narrow border of arable land, extending in breadth from a few hundred yards to one mile. The whole of the interior conſiſts of mountains, lakes, rocks, and narrow valleys, intermixed here and there with vaſt tracts of ſlow moſs. The tillage land is of the moſt kindly turnip loam; and the paſturage of the mountains is filled with alpine plants common to the Cheviot mountains. The ſucceſſion of theſe alpine plants render the mountainous diſtricts remarkably ſuitable for the maintenance of ſheep ſtock. On the firſt melting of the ſnow, the Cotton graſs is diſcovered to have been growing rapidly. It forms a moſt healthy and abundant food for ſheep until about the firſt of May, at which time it is in ſeed, and the Deer hair takes its place, ſtarting up almoſt inſtantaneouſly, and forming, in the courſe of one week, if the ground has been recently burnt and the weather be favourable, a green cover for the mountains. This plant grows along with ſeveral varieties of bents until the firſt of Auguſt, when the Cotton graſs again begins to ſpring, and with the pry moſs, to come a ſecond time into flower in September; after which, the heather and more heating plants continue until the froſts of winter.

This diſtrict was diſtinguiſhed by the ſame arrangement of ſociety which formerly exiſted all over the Highlands of Scotland. A hardy, but not induſtrious, race of people ſcattered over the various glens and ſides of the mountains, raiſing, without much labour, a ſmall quantity of inferior oats, of which they made their cakes, and of bear, from which they diſtilled their whiſkey, added little to the induſtry or to the wealth of the empire.

The cattle which they reared upon the mountains were of the pooreſt deſcription. They had hardly enough of food to keep them during the ſummer, and in the winter they periſhed in numbers for want of ſuſtenance. The habits of the people, though thus naturally far from induſtrious, were rendered ſtill leſs ſo, by the introduction of the potatoe, as it enabled them with leſs labour than before to raiſe what was ſufficient for the maintenance

tenance of their families, their pigs, and their poultry.—Contented with the pooreſt and moſt ſimple fare, and, like all mountaineers, accuſtomed to a roaming unſettled life, which attached them in the ſtrongeſt manner to the habits and the homes of their fathers, they deemed no new comfort worth the poſſeſſing, which was to be acquired at the price of induſtry; no improvement worthy of adoption, if it was to be obtained at the expenſe of ſacrificing the cuſtoms, or leaving the hovels of their anceſtors. In no country in Europe, at any period of its hiſtory, did there ever exiſt more formidable obſtacles to the improvement of a people ariſing from the feelings and prejudices of the people themſelves. Few of the lower orders held immediately of their landlord. A numerous race of middlemen poſſeſſed the land, and along with the farms they occupied, the inhabitants were abandoned to their controul and management; ſervices of the moſt oppreſſive nature were demanded. The whole economy of his houſe, his farm, ſecuring his fuel, and gathering in his harveſt, was exacted by the intermediate occupier from the dependants on his poſſeſſion. It was a bad bargain indeed if the middleman could not contrive to hold that part of his farm which he retained in his own hand, rent-free. Such a ſtate of things was not likely to produce much activity or induſtry among the middle claſſes of ſociety, while it heaped upon the lower orders much miſery, and operated, with reſpect to both, as a complete bar to all improvement. To emancipate the lower orders from their ſlavery, by placing them as immediate tenants to the landlord—to render them induſtrious by putting them in ſituations where their exertions would be rewarded by ſucceſs—to induce the middle claſs of ſociety to adopt the habits which characteriſe their brethren in the ſouth, and gradually to raiſe themſelves and families in conſideration and wealth, and to encreaſe their comfort and enjoyments, has been the unceaſing object of the HIGHLAND PROPRIETORS for the laſt 20 years. Though ſomewhat later in point of time, the Landlords of Sutherland have been behind none in their exertions to promote theſe laudable objects. They had to contend with difficulties, however, to which thoſe whoſe property was ſituated further ſouth were not expoſed. The diſtance of this county from the cultivated diſtricts of Scotland,

land, had not only encreaſed the evils which were to be got rid of, by multiplying the population who were to be the objects of amelioration, but it at the ſame time deprived the proprietors of many of the facilities which the neighbourhood of large manufacturing towns, flouriſhing villages, and a country rapidly advancing in agricultural proſperity, held out for the accommodation, and the employment of thoſe whom the improved ſyſtem made it neceſſary to remove. The habits beſides of thoſe Highlanders who were ſituated on the borders of the low countries had been, from ſuch vicinage, gradually rendered more ſteady and induſtrious than had been the caſe in Sutherland. In making ſimilar changes, therefore, in this diſtrict, it was neceſſary to look out for ſettlements for the inhabitants, who might be removed from the mountains, in ſituations where they might ſupport their families; and, in the progreſs of time, adopt ſuch induſtrious habits as the nature of the country and its productions held out to their enterpriſe and exertion.

It had been long known that the coaſt of Sutherland was frequented by many different kinds of fiſh in the greateſt abundance, affording not only a ſufficient quantity for the conſumption of the country, and that obtained with little labour, but affording alſo the greateſt quantity for the ſupply of more diſtant markets, and for exportation, when cured and ſalted. Beſides this continual and ordinary ſupply of white fiſh, the ſhores of Sutherland are annually viſited by one of thoſe vaſt ſhoals of herrings which frequent the coaſt of Scotland.

The ſyſtem of improvement pointed out, therefore, (as if it were by nature) for this remote diſtrict, ſo that it might bear its ſuitable importance in contributing its ſhare to the general ſtock of the country, was to convert the mountainous diſtricts into ſheep walks, and to remove the inhabitants to the arable land on the coaſt, and in the vallies near the ſea.

The object to be obtained by this arrangement was twofold—It was, in the firſt place, to render this mountainous diſtrict contributary, as far as it was poſſible, to the general wealth and induſtry of the country, and in the manner moſt ſuitable to its ſituation and peculiar circumſtances.—This was to be effected by making it produce a large ſupply

of wool for the ſtaple manufactory of England, while at the ſame time it ſhould there ſupport as numerous a population as it had hitherto done at home.—And in the ſecond place, to convert the former population of theſe diſtricts to induſtrious and regular habits, and to enable them to bring to market a very conſiderable ſurplus quantity of proviſions for the ſupply of the large towns in the ſouthern parts of the iſland, or for the purpoſe of exportation. A wiſe and generous policy, and well calculated to encreaſe the happineſs of the individuals themſelves, who were the object of the change, to benefit thoſe to whom theſe extenſive domains belonged, and to promote the general proſperity of the nation.* Such was the ſyſtem which was adopted. Every means to enſure its ſucceſs was reſorted to, and upon the part of the proprietors, the ſtricteſt injunctions were given, that every care ſhould be taken to reconcile the people to the change. It was directed that full time ſhould be given to them to remove to their new habitations, and that they ſhould have them diſtinctly pointed out long before they were obliged to move.

It has been now acted upon (eſpecially upon the ESTATE of SUTHERLAND) for ſeveral years, and its beneficial effects are already felt to an extent hardly to have been looked for, in ſo ſhort a period. The mountain paſtures, ſo far as exiſting leaſes have permitted, have been converted into extenſive ſheep walks, partly let to ſome enterpriſing individuals of the country, and partly to ſubſtantial tenants from the north of England, who have, with their ſuperior knowledge in the management of ſheep, introduced the improved breed of Cheviots, which has added much to the importance of this diſtrict. A large quantity of wool is now annually exported to the manufacturer; and many flocks of, from 300 to 500 ſheep each, are yearly driven ſouth, partly to be fed by theſe Northumberland breeders on their north of

* Theſe arrangements will alſo be attended with this additional advantage, the deſtruction of the ſmuggling trade; which continued to exiſt among the mountains, in ſpite of all the laws that were paſſed to check this evil. The extent to which this illegal trade was carried on was very great, to the ſerious and direct injury of the revenue. The effect of it, moreover, upon the habits and morals of the people was moſt pernicious; nurſing them up in every ſpecies of deceit, vice, idleneſs and diſſipation, which ſuch a courſe of life naturally inſpires. Living, in this reſpect, in the continued breach and defiance of the laws, they contracted habits and ideas quite incompatible with the cuſtoms of regular and civilized ſociety; and to ſuch an extent was this diſregard of the laws indulged, and ſo much did it affect their notions on the ſubject, that even now the ejection of a tenant at the end of his leaſe, in the moſt ordinary caſes, muſt frequently be enforced by calling out extraordinary aſſiſtance to aid the civil power.

of England farms, and partly to be ſold at the border and Yorkſhire markets†

From the ESTATE of SUTHERLAND alone, the quantity of wool, of Cheviot growth, exported, may exceed annually 140,000lb.; and although the firſt flock of this breed was introduced upon that property ſo late as 1808, their numbers already amount to between 40 and 50,000.‡

No leſs proſperous, conſidering the greater difficulties there has been to contend with, has been the ſucceſs which has attended that part of the arrangement, which is connected with the removal of the inhabitants to thoſe ſituations which have been fixed upon as moſt ſuitable for them.* The primary and the moſt important change which has been made in the ſituation of this claſs of people, is, that they have all been made immediate tenants to the proprietor. Services and payments in kind have been aboliſhed; in lieu of which, fixed money rents, on a moderate ſcale, have been ſubſtituted.

To every cottage is attached a quantity of land at leaſt ſufficient for the maintenance of a cow; but in moſt caſes, every cottager has had allotted to him, from two to three Scotch

† The practice of the border farmers is, to divide their farms into ewe land, hog fence, gimmer hirſel, and wether hirſels. The ewe drops her lamb about the firſt of May, juſt when the Deer hair comes into ſeaſon; it follows the dam until the Deer hair fades in Auguſt, when it is weaned and put under the hog herd—He keeps his flock on high ground for a few weeks, but ſhortly drives it along with any weak ſheep on the farm, into the hog fence, conſiſting of lower ground, and where turnips are, if poſſible, grown. Here he tends them until the mountain ſnow begins to melt in ſpring As ſoon as the moſſing graſs has ſprung in February or March, and the weather is apparently ſomewhat ſettled, he delivers over his charge; the ewe hogs to the gimmer herd, and the wether hogs to the wether herd; he then aſſiſts the ewe herds in lambing their hirſels, and where ever elſe extra help may be required, until Auguſt, when he receives the next crop of lambs, as in the preceding ſeaſon; meantime the young ſheep, delivered off his charge in March, follow two ſeveral courſes—the ewe hog, or gimmer, after being kept eighteen months, is delivered, at two years and half old, to the ewe herd, where ſhe continues until ſhe drop three or four lambs, and is then ſent ſouth to the Engliſh feeder. The wether hog continues in the wether hirſel two years and half, and at the age of three years and half, he paſſes ſouth in like manner.

‡ The introduction of the pure Merino has alſo been tried by a Gentleman who occupies a coaſt-ſide farm, with a conſiderable range of hill paſture. The experiment has been now made for ſeveral years, and with ſuch ſucceſs, that the flock has been gradually extended, both by breeding and importation from England. The ſeverity of the winter does not appear to affect them; and indeed, as far as the experience of one ſevere winter (1813-14) can be held to prove any thing, it would appear that the quantity of wool is great in proportion to the ſeverity of the weather. If this experiment ſucceeds to the extent it bids fair to do, it will be of the greateſt advantage to thoſe coaſt-ſide farms, to which an extenſive range of hill paſture can be united.

* The Sutherland eſtate has, in compariſon to its extent, only a ſmall portion of coaſt, which has made it neceſſary to place a portion of the ſettlers in the valleys neareſt to the ſea. The further they are removed from the coaſt the larger is their allotment of land. On the Reay eſtate, where the changes have been alſo made with great judgment, the large extent of ſea coaſt, as compared with the interior, has enabled LORD REAY to place all his ſettlers on the ſhore.

Scotch acres, capable of cultivation, with a proportional quantity of hill paſture. The new ſettlers have adopted, with alacrity, every improvement in agriculture which their limited means will permit. The improvements which they have commenced, and which are now in progreſs, by bringing into cultivation conſiderable portions of waſte land, may be ſaid to be aſtoniſhing; and the exertions they have made ſince their induſtry has received a proper direction, and has been confined within proper limits, adapted to their reſpective means, give them a character totally different from that which formerly diſtinguiſhed them. As they have encreaſed in induſtry, ſo have they encreaſed in the knowledge and deſire to poſſeſs thoſe comforts which their circumſtances can afford. Their turf hovels, after having, in the firſt inſtance, given place to cottages built of rough ſtone, without mortar, are, by degrees, changed into neat houſes, conſtructed of ſtone and lime. A greater attention to cleanlineſs commences to be an object; and the cow and the pig begin no longer to inhabit the ſame dwelling with the family.

The cultivation of the farm goes on without that interruption which the vexatious ſervices, due to the principal tenant, hitherto produced. That portion of their time which is not occupied in the cultivation of their ſmall poſſeſſions, is employed in the public works in the county, or in thoſe which are executing on the ESTATE of SUTHERLAND; except, during the ſeaſon when the herrings reſort to the coaſt. During this period, they now engage with much ardour, and proportionate ſucceſs, in the proſecution of that lucrative branch of fiſhery. The principal fiſhing ſtation in this part of the iſland is at Wick, in the county of Caithneſs, where the herring fiſhery has, for ſome years, been carried on to a very great extent. At firſt, the Sutherland people contented themſelves with reſorting to this harbour, and hiring themſelves as fiſhermen to the adventurers of that place; a few only from the northern parts of the ESTATE of SUTHERLAND fitted out boats themſelves, and carried on their fiſhing from that port. In 1814, however, ſome enterpriſing individuals upon that property attempted to eſtabliſh the fiſhery upon the ſouth coaſt of Sutherland. The mouth of the Helmſdale was fixed upon as the ſtation, and the MARQUIS and MARCHIONESS of STAFFORD aſſiſted their attempts by erecting a proper curing and ſtore-

houſe

houſe at that place; the boats were manned by the people of the country who had been brought from the mountains and the interior of the country to the ſea ſhore and the adjacent vallies—their ſucceſs was much greater than could have been expected from the efforts of men unacquainted with the management of a boat, and new to every thing in which they were employed. The following ſtatement of the gains of ſome boats engaged in this adventure, will not only ſhew the extent of their ſucceſs, but, at the ſame time prove the importance of the fiſhery itſelf, both as a lucrative employment to men who formerly ſpent their days in comparative idleneſs and inactivity, and as a vaſt ſource of wealth to the nation at large, when proſecuted on a ſcale equal to the wants and demands of the country. —For the fiſhing which commenced on the 20th July, and ended on the 3d September, 1814, the produce of four boats was, reſpectively,—£105. 3s.—£83. 8s.—£96. 8s.—and £148. 3s. They were manned by four men each, ſo they made upon an average rather more than £27. a man.*

In 1815, the number of boats employed amounted to 50, almoſt entirely manned by Sutherland men; and the number of barrels caught and repacked, exceeded 4000, chiefly gutted; on which ſeveral hundred pounds of bounty have been obtained. One cargo of them has been ſent to Riga; a conſiderable quantity is intended for other ports in the Baltic, and ſome for the Weſt India markets. There were employed about 200 tenants, 17 coopers, and 130 women. In the courſe of this laſt fiſhing, the people purſued the herrings from Helmſdale to Tarbet Neſs, being a ſtretch of ſea exceeding 20 miles; a ſpirited attempt for men not verſed in maritime affairs.

Such are the happy effects, and the cheering proſpect, which the late changes in Sutherland hold out; and it can never be too much enforced, that if the original ſtate of things had continued to exiſt, theſe people would, during the

* As a proof of the unlimited power poſſeſſed and exerciſed by the intermediate proprietors over the dependants who are placed upon their farms, it may be mentioned, that theſe poor people dare not proſecute this lucrative branch of fiſhery, without the leave of their immediate ſuperiors; and this power is not always exerciſed in the gentleſt way; and inſtances are known, where ſuch leave has been refuſed, in order that the tenant might reſerve to himſelf the benefit of their labour in carrying on this fiſhery.

the above periods, have earned little for the ſupport of their families, and would not have contributed in the leaſt to the general induſtry or wealth of the country. Their former ſettlements in the mountains being at the ſame time made ſubſervient to the induſtry and ſupport of a population, equal in amount to their own. Thus, to this extent, at one and the ſame time, and by one arrangement, multiplying in a fourfold proportion the reſources of the nation.

The ſucceſs which has thus ſo happily attended the firſt exertions that have been made to proſecute the herring fiſhery, has encouraged the ſame adventurers to attempt the cod and ling fiſhery, and to cure them for the London and foreign markets. The MARQUIS and MARCHIONESS of STAFFORD have alſo come forward here with their aid, by building excellent houſes for fiſhermen at Port Gower, and by directing premiums to be offered to thoſe who ſhew the greateſt induſtry and ſkill.

To the body of the people at large, theſe changes, when once carried into effect, have been as acceptable, as they have been advantageous. That they have been ſo to all, it were vain to hope. To the lazy, and to the idle, to the ſheep-ſtealer, and the whiſkey ſmuggler, they never can, nor is it deſirable that they ſhould be pleaſing. By another claſs of people, of a deſcription very different from the laſt, theſe arrangements alſo are diſliked, inaſmuch as they are hoſtile to the prejudices of their education, and prejudicial to their immediate intereſts. It has been already remarked, that the bulk of the Highlands of Scotland was occupied by a numerous, but not an active, race of intermediate tenants, who generally contrived, by bearing hard upon thoſe who lived under them, to hold that portion of the farm which they retained in their own poſſeſſion, rent free. The late changes have introduced a very different ſyſtem: the real value of the farm, in a money rent, was demanded; and theſe intermediate tenants were no longer permitted to exercife the ſame power over the lower orders, as heretofore. Many of them have, with a ſpirit and liberality which does them the greateſt honour, acquieſced in the propriety of the change, and have retaken their farms under the new arrangement. All, however, have not done ſo, and it is perhaps natural, tho' not quite reaſonable, that they ſhould complain loudly

of

of a ſyſtem under which they ſuffer, and that they ſhould endeavour to give a colour to the whole arrangement the furtheſt poſſible from what is correct. Being aware that they have no real cauſe of complaint, and particularly none with which the publick can at all ſympathiſe, they endeavour to miſlead thoſe who live at a diſtance, by repreſenting the arrangements which have been adopted, as fraught with oppreſſion, and inattention to the happineſs and intereſts of the people; and for no other reaſon than becauſe, one of the principal characters of the meaſure is, to relieve the lower orders from that ſtate of degradation to which they were reduced by their dependence upon thoſe who now feel ſo tender a ſolicitude in their behalf.

One other queſtion upon this part of the ſubject, and one only remains to be conſidered, and that is—To enquire what effect theſe arrangements have had upon the numbers of the people?—for it is a queſtion of natural intereſt to learn, whether, in accompliſhing ſuch a vaſt change, many of the inhabitants have been forced to quit their country, and to ſeek their ſubſiſtence beyond the Atlantic. Much as ſuch an effect would be to be regretted, on account of the individuals themſelves, (even if ſuch had been the effect of the meaſures which have been purſued,) and therefore to have been avoided,—Yet there can be no queſtion (as the idle and the lazy alone think of emigration) but that the ſtate at large would ſtill have been much benefited by the change—from the alteration and amelioration in the manners and habits of thoſe who remained at home, and from the vaſt additional ſupply ſent to the Engliſh manufacturer and farmer—But while this obſervation is made upon the general ſtatement of the queſtion, it muſt be agreeable to learn, that there has been no general emigration from the diſtricts in queſtion—and that tho' ſome individuals have quitted the country, yet they did ſo in conſequence of the ſolicitations and repreſentations of various perſons, either the proprietors of land in America, or of perſons having ſpeculations connected therewith. Theſe perſons have carefully and painfully traverſed the county, and beat up for recruits. The melancholy letters which have been ſent home by thoſe few who were, in an unhappy hour, tempted to truſt to the promiſes which were held out to them, will probably prevent a re-

currence

currence of theſe diſaſtrous and calamitous experiments; and happy would thoſe poor people now be, to be again at home in the occupation of the vacant lots which they have left. For it muſt be underſtood, as it is here ſtated in the broadeſt and moſt unequivocal manner, that the conſtant and invariable directions of the proprietors have been, that no diſtrict ſhould be newly arranged until other and convenient lots were marked out and reſerved for thoſe who were to be removed; and it is a fact which cannot be controverted, that no one has been obliged to leave the country becauſe he had not a lot of land equal to his wants, and ſufficient for the ſubſiſtence of his family. Thoſe men who have left the country, are either thoſe who preferred a life of wandering to a life of induſtry; or who were ſent out of the country on account of their lawleſs character, and the general reprobation of their neighbours.

Thus much it has been thought neceſſary to ſay upon this ſubject, generally; but upon an examination of the facts as they really ſtand, it will be found, that in place of the population having decreaſed, it actually has augmented, at leaſt upon the Estate of Sutherland. This will diſtinctly appear, from the table which is ſubjoined, and which exhibits the population as it ſtood in 1811, and its amount at the preſent moment. This table, however, is more uſeful in a further point of view, as it ſhews, that the arrangements which have been adopted, ſo far from being detrimental to the population of the country, are far more conducive to its increaſe than the old ſyſtem. It will be obſerved, that the population of Aſſynt (where the changes have been moſt complete, and were adopted ſooner) has increaſed in a greater proportion than in any of the other pariſhes. But indeed it was not neceſſary that ſuch a ſtatement ſhould be produced to ſhew that where men are induſtrious and have plenty of food, they increaſe more rapidly than a leſs active and more precarioufly fed population can do. The fears of all thoſe, therefore, who from partial ſtatements, miſtaken notions, or, from the natural feeling of attachment and affection to the cuſtoms of their fathers, dread that the improvements of the Highlands of Scotland will deprive the nation of a great body of her moſt hardy and intrepid defenders, may completely ceaſe; and they may, on the other

other hand, be congratulated on the certainty of this claſs of people becoming daily more numerous and more robuſt; at leaſt, as far as the improvements of this diſtrict of the country are felt, or can extend.

| | *Pariſhes.* | Population 1811. | Population 1815. | Increaſe. | Decreaſe. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Aſſynt | 2479 | 2745 | 266 | |
| 2 | Creich | 76 | 76 | | |
| 3 | Lairg | 829 | 719 | | 110 |
| 4 | Dornoch | 1590 | 1706 | 116 | |
| 5 | Rogart | 1831 | 1685 | | 146 |
| 6 | Golſpie | 1391 | 1360 | | 31 |
| 7 | Clyne | 1639 | 1727 | 88 | |
| 8 | Loth | 1330 | 1298 | | 32 |
| 9 | Kildonan | 1574 | 1400 | | 174 |
| 10 | Farr | 2408 | 2520 | 112 | |
| 11 | Reay | 189 | 189 | | |
| | | 15,336 | 15,425 | 582 | 493 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Total population of the ESTATE of SUTHERLAND in 1815 | 15,425 |
| Ditto, 1811 | 15,336 |
| Increaſe | 89 |

Note.—There is only one farm in each of the pariſhes of Creich and Reay, belonging to the ESTATE of SUTHERLAND. It is not known what proportion the population of theſe farms bore to the total population of theſe pariſhes in 1811. They have encreaſed—but, to avoid error, they are ſuppoſed, in 1811, to be as populous as they are at preſent.

The improvements which have been hitherto treated of, are, in ſome meaſure, common to the whole county; though, as they were begun ſooner, and have been carried on, upon a much more extenſive ſcale on the ESTATE of SUTHERLAND, than on any of the other eſtates in the county, they have been conſidered chiefly with relation to that property. In many other important particulars, the

the exertions of the county at large, as well as of the proprietors of that extenſive property have been extended in a way to promote, and to invigorate the late introduced induſtry, and the youthful exertions of the natives of SUTHERLAND.

In no quarter of the HIGHLANDS have there been greater exertions made to avail themſelves of the judicious liberality of Parliament, in virtue of the proviſions contained in the acts for making roads and building bridges in the HIGHLANDS of SCOTLAND, than by the heritors of the county of Sutherland. The conſequence has been, that about 90 miles of road are already made, or are now under contract, including a bridge conſiſting of two arches of 70 feet ſpan each, which is thrown over the Helmſdale river; and many others of inferior dimenſions. The roads are ſubſtantially made, and, in general, conducted according to the beſt principles. In order to ſurmount the difficulty experienced in paſſing the Ord of Caithneſs, a ſtupendous mountain, which jutting into the ocean, and ending in a high and precipitous cliff—is interſected with deep ravines, by which the communication between the counties of Caithneſs and Sutherland is rendered almoſt impracticable, the road has been conducted to the top of the mountain with ſuch ſkill and ſcience, as to deceive the traveller into the belief that he has aſcended only a very inconſiderable hill, until he perceives the objects below him ſo much leſſened as to convince him that he has actually aſcended to a prodigious height. Still, however, the county of Sutherland remained ſubject to the very great inconvenience of being ſeparated from the reſt of the iſland by means of the Frith of Dornoch, which had to be croſſed by a ferry, frequently dangerous, ſometimes impracticable, always uncertain—beſides being divided in itſelf by another Frith called the Fleet, where the ferry, though leſs dangerous than the other, was yet often impaſſable, and at all times formed an inconvenient interruption to the general intercourſe of the country. The former of theſe two inconveniences has been ſurmounted by the erection of a magnificent ſtructure, compoſed of an extenſive embankment, with a bridge conſiſting of two ſtone arches of 50 and 60 feet reſpectively, and of one iron arch of 150 feet ſpan. The expenſe of this bridge, which was

borne

borne in equal moieties by the Parliamentary Commiſſioners and the County of Sutherland, amounted to £13000.

The latter of theſe interruptions is at preſent in the way of being removed, by the conſtruction of a mound acroſs the Fleet, at a convenient ſpot for the purpoſe. This mound will extend about 1000 yards in length, with a bridge conſiſting of five arches ſituated at one end, fitted with valve gates to exclude the tide. The expenſe of this work is alſo borne in equal moieties by the Parliamentary Commiſſioners and the County, with the additional ſubſcription of £1000 from the MARQUIS of STAFFORD, being the eſtimated value of the advantage which the ESTATE of SUTHERLAND is expected to derive from the execution of this work. The eſtimated expenſe is £8500.

Deſirous of availing themſelves of theſe public works, to which, indeed, they are by law as well as by voluntary ſubſcription, the principal contributors; and anxious to adopt every meaſure which is neceſſary to ſtimulate the induſtry, and excite the exertions of the population of their vaſt eſtate —the MARQUIS and MARCHIONESS of STAFFORD have carried their views much further, and have left no means untried to remove the obſtacles which has hitherto retarded the improvement of this diſtrict. They have, as it were, brought the means and inducement to induſtry home to the doors of every one deſirous and willing to avail themſelves of the opportunity thus afforded them for their improvement —and they have the ſatisfaction of reflecting, that in all the great meaſures which they have carried into effect, they have not loſt one individual from their eſtate becauſe he had no ſettlement to go to; ſtill leſs from his not having had held out to him every inducement to be induſtrious, or from his not having had placed within his reach, not merely the means of living, but alſo of greatly improving his ſituation and condition in life.

Every encouragement has been given, by granting leaſes on moderate terms, and for a ſufficient endurance to induce the tenants to exert themſelves in the better cultivation of the coaſt-ſide land. The conſequence has been, that extenſive fields of wheat (ſome of them drilled after the moſt improved ſyſtem of Norfolk huſbandry), ſeveral hundred acres of turnips ſown upon the ridge, and well horſe-hoed, with excellent crops of clover, are now ſeen,

where

where, a very few years ſince, there was nothing to be found but a very few patches of the moſt miſerable oats and bear with which the land was alternately cropped, until it was brought to ſuch a ſtate of exhauſtion, that it would not even produce the ſeed that was beſtowed upon it. It was then left in a ſtate of nature to recruit its ſtrength, under the cover of every ſort of weed, until it became neceſſary again to have recourſe to the ſame miſerable routine of barbarous huſbandry. Even the advantages preſented to them by nature, were neglected; and it was not until lately that that valuable manure, ſea ware, which is at times thrown up in great abundance upon the coaſt, was uſed by the farmer in the cultivation of his land.

Previous to the introduction of this improved ſyſtem of huſbandry, commodious farm buildings, with every thing connected therewith, were to be erected. The MARQUIS of STAFFORD accordingly has, at the Mains of Dunrobin, at Morvich, and at Uppat, built the moſt ſubſtantial farm offices—Theſe have been conſtructed upon the moſt improved plans, ſuited to the climate, and the nature of the country. LORD GOWER has done the ſame upon a farm his Lordſhip has brought into cultivation at Skelbo. Beſides theſe buildings, erected directly at the expenſe of the landlord, every encouragement and aid has been given to the tenants to erect ſimilar buildings, adapted to the ſize and purpoſes of their reſpective farms. The number of farm-houſes, and offices, which have been thus conſtructed upon this eſtate, with the aſſiſtance of the landlord, given either more or leſs directly, or to a greater or more limited degree, exceeds twenty.

The magnitude of theſe undertakings however, is not to be calculated by their number, nor yet by the extent of each; nor can they be fully eſtimated by a ſtranger, until he is informed, that to execute them, it was neceſſary to collect carpenters, maſons. ſmiths, and all other tradeſmen and mechanics, from the counties lying on the oppoſite coaſt—that the lime, whether uſed in building, or in agriculture, was to be imported from Sunderland—that Newcaſtle ſupplied coals—the interior of Aberdeenſhire, ſlates—Speyſide, timber—and Peterhead, bricks and tiles—with the ſingle exception of ſtones, none of the materials were found in the country. It

It was an object of great moment, therefore, both for preſent ſaving, and for the future proſperity of the country, to diſcover if any of theſe firſt neceſſaries in the advancement towards a higher ſtage of civilized life exiſted, or could be manufactured, in the country. This was important alſo, as either the diſcovery of the one, or the eſtabliſhment of the other, would open a new ſource of employment to the inhabitants.

Of theſe articles, lime, upon the whole, was the moſt eſſential. The ſubſtantial tenant could, either by himſelf, or in conjunction with others, purchaſe a cargo of lime from Sunderland; and mutual neceſſity made the landing and ſecuring it the buſineſs of the adjoining farmers. Such an exertion, however, was far above the means of thoſe ſettlers, either individually, or collectively; who, removed from the mountains, were ſtraining every nerve in the cultivation of their lots, or in converting their mud huts into cottages built of ſtone and lime. Unleſs this article therefore could be procured by them, as the occaſion ſuited, (whether for the one purpoſe or the other) in quantities ſufficiently ſmall, and at ſuch periods as they could obtain the hire of a horſe and cart, it is evident that their exertions muſt have been checked in the outſet, and all chance of their improvement muſt have been at once cut off.

A diligent ſearch was accordingly made, and limeſtone was diſcovered near the village of Golſpie, to the ſouth of Dunrobin Caſtle. Fuel to burn it was not abſolutely wanting, ſo long as peat or turf could be procured. Still, however, the labour and coſt of getting this, made it a tedious proceſs and an expenſive article. Coal had formerly been worked on this coaſt, near the mouth of the river Brora, north of Dunrobin Caſtle. The MARQUIS of STAFFORD determined to make another trial, and his Lordſhip ſucceeded in finding a coal from 3 feet 2 inches to 3 feet 8 inches thick, at the depth of 250 feet from the ſurface. It has been ſkilfully contrived to fix the ſituation of the firſt pits in ſuch a manner, that the raiſing of the coal, and the pumping of the water, is performed by a very powerful water wheel, capable of two motions—a rail-way, extending about 800 yards has been laid from theſe pits to the mouth of the Brora, where a moſt convenient harbour and ſhipping-place for coals has been con-

ſtructed, at an expenſe of £2,600. In order further to make uſe of the ſmall coal which the demands of the country would not carry off, his Lordſhip has erected four large ſalt pans in the vicinity of the ſea and connected with the pits and the harbour by means of an extenſion of the rail-way. The manufacture of ſalt has already been carried on to a conſiderable extent, being of excellent quality, owing to the ſuperior ſaltneſs of the ſea water, the freſhneſs of the waters of the more ſoutherly parts of the German Ocean, having no influence ſo far to the north. It has already had the excellent effect of lowering the retail price of ſalt to the poor people more than one third. An extenſive range of colliers' houſes—houſes for the ſalters—with a houſe and office for the manager—and another range of houſes for fiſhermen, ſimilar to thoſe erected at Port Gower, with the neceſſary workſhops—ſtables—and granaries, have alſo been erected here,

Theſe circumſtances, combined with others, pointed out Brora as a place well calculated for the eſtabliſhment of a village. Every encouragement was accordingly held out to ſettlers; the conſequence has been that there are already ſix new houſes building, each to conſiſt of two ſtories beſides garrets—and a brewery has been eſtabliſhed, with the MARCHIONESS of STAFFORD's aſſiſtance, by a perſon from Staffordſhire, who is moſt competent to undertake this line of buſineſs, in the expectation that the uſe of malt liquor will, in time, ſuperſede that of whiſkey.

In executing theſe different buildings, great difficulties and much inconvenience was experienced, from the neceſſity of bringing all the bricks and tiles which were required, from Peterhead. To obviate this, his Lordſhip again came forward, and a tile and brick work of conſiderable extent has been eſtabliſhed; with the requiſite buildings—ſheds—houſes for workmen—clay-mills, &c. the clay-mills being driven by diverting a portion of the ſtream which ſupplies the water-wheel attached to the coal machinery.* This as well as the coal work, is under the direction of experienced

* In ſearching for clay fit for the purpoſe of making bricks, ſagger clay was diſcovered, and alſo a ſpecies of clay which appeared well adapted for the conſtruction of the coarſer ſorts of earthen ware. A ſpecimen of it having been ſent to Staffordſhire, it was proved to be of a ſufficient quality for this purpoſe by Mr SPODE, at his works at Stoke—In conſequence of which, an offer has been ſubmitted to the MARQUIS of STAFFORD, for the purpoſe of eſtabliſhing a pot-work for the manufacture of the coarſer articles of earthen ware, for the uſe of the country, upon his Lordſhip erecting ſuitable accommodations for carrying it on.

enced perſons brought from Staffordſhire; but all the men who are employed, whether below or above ground, are natives of the county of Sutherland. The bare mention of this fact is ſufficient to ſhew the importance of theſe works to the country in every point of view; and the rapid progreſs which the people have already made.

Such are the outlines of the more prominent improvements which have been carrying on for ſome years on the ESTATE of SUTHERLAND—and whether their extent or their importance is conſidered, it is not too much to affirm, that they have not only never been ſurpaſſed, but probably have never been equalled in the United Kingdom. The limits to which this account has purpoſely been reſtricted, has prevented the particular enumeration of many other works of conſiderable magnitude, and of vaſt conſequence to the Eſtate and County. Under the heads of draining, encloſing and planting, very extenſive tracts of land have been brought into a ſtate of cultivation and productiveneſs, and otherwiſe converted to uſeful purpoſes. Thraſhing machines, on the moſt improved principles, have been put up.* New corn mills have been built, in place of the very wretched machines that heretofore bore that name; and a flour mill has for the firſt time been erected; and a baker has been eſtabliſhed in the village of Golſpie, whoſe buſineſs is gradually upon the increaſe. A ſadler and harneſs maker has alſo been eſtabliſhed in a houſe and ſhop built on purpoſe; and a ſhoemaker has been ſettled in a new houſe fitted for his trade. Three excellent inns, one at Golſpie, a ſecond at Brora, and the third at Port Gower, with improved accommodations, have been erected—and it is ſatisfactory to obſerve, that a greater attention to cleanlineſs and comfort is gradually extending itſelf, even in this remote diſtrict; and that the pains which have been beſtowed upon making the different buildings convenient, are not entirely thrown away. A convenient pier built near Dunrobin Caſtle, at an expenſe exceeding £700, and a weekly packet eſtabliſhed between and it the oppoſite coaſt, keeps up a conſtant intercourſe, moſt advantageous to Sutherland. The ancient Caſtle which belonged to the Biſhops of Caithneſs, at Dornoch, has been repaired, and given to be

* That at Dunrobin Mains is driven by a ſtream which is diverted from Golſpie burn—which, in its courſe, ſucceſſively drives the thraſhing machine, ſupplies water to the cattle, the poultry-yard, the caſtle, the dairy, the garden, the baths, and, laſtly, ſcours the harbour.

be uſed for county purpoſes. Theſe improvements, with many others of a ſimilar nature, if treated of ſeparately, would extend this ſtatement to a length far beyond its juſt limits, and ſufficient has been ſaid to explain the extent, the nature, and the wiſdom of the different works which have been carried on. The outlay upon theſe various works, as may well be imagined, has been very great. The hope of immediate profit, though not neglected, has never been permitted to ſtand in the way of any permanent advantage, though not accompanied with preſent gain; and it muſt be apparent to thoſe who are at all acquainted with ſuch matters, that although in ſome few inſtances the returns may be immediate and direct, yet, in others, a long interval muſt elapſe before any can be expected, while in many inſtances they can only be obtained indirectly, through the encreaſed induſtry, and the improved habits of the people.

The object of this ſtatement has been to endeavour to ſhew, in the *firſt* place, that nothing could be more at variance with the general intereſts of ſociety and the individual happineſs of the people themſelves, than the original ſtate of Highland manners and cuſtoms. *Secondly*, that the adoption of the new ſyſtem, by which the mountainous diſtricts are converted into ſheep paſtures, even if it ſhould unfortunately occaſion the emigration of ſome individuals, is, upon the whole, advantageous to the nation at large. *Thirdly*, that the introduction of ſheep farms is perfectly compatible with retaining the ancient population in the country. *Fourthly*, that the effect of this change is moſt advantageous to the people themſelves; relieving them from perſonal ſervices, improving their induſtrious habits, and tending directly to their rapid increaſe and improvement. And *laſtly*, that the improvements which have been and are now carrying on in Sutherland, have had conſtantly for their object the employment, the comfort, and the happineſs of every individual who has been the object of removal; and that there is no one ſingle inſtance of any man having left this country on account of his not having had a lot provided for him; and that thoſe who have gone, have been induced to do ſo by the perſuaſion of others, and not from themſelves; and that in point of numbers they are moſt inſignificant.

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